



PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up from 8.5 percent in August to 8.6 percent in September because the *Lumber & Wood Products* industry remains depressed. In addition, two Internet companies laid off workers between August and September.

High fire danger this summer caused forest authorities to impose hoot owl restrictions and to limit logging and other forest activities. However, rain in September allowed them to lift the restrictions, and some lumber mills that laid-off workers this summer brought their crews back to work. Many loggers returned to work, as well. Consequently, *Lumber & Wood Products* employment increased by 340 jobs between August and September. However, it was 500 jobs lower than in September 1999.

Decreased logging and mill activity also reduced employment at *Transportation* and *Wholesale Trade* operations serving the wood products industry. The layoffs and uncertainty about what the future holds for the lumber industry slowed retail spending in lumber-dependent communities during recent months.

The rest of the Panhandle's economy continues to thrive. *Communications & Utilities* added 100 jobs at the Verizon order-processing centers in Coeur d'Alene between September 1999 and September 2000. All other *Manufacturing*, *Retail Trade*, *Services*, and *Government* employment enjoyed solid growth. *Construction* employment in September was 2.9 percent lower than the record level of September 1999 and 0.8 percent lower than September 1998, but still exceeded employment in every other September of the booming 1990s.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Benewah County

- Valley Vista recently began a \$1.1 million expansion at its St. Maries

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

| | Sept 2000 | August 2000 | Sept 1999 | % Change From | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | Last Month | Last Year |
| INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE | | | | | |
| Seasonally Adjusted | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 92,040 | 89,510 | 90,160 | 2.8 | 2.1 |
| Unemployed | 7,910 | 7,620 | 7,350 | 3.8 | 7.6 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 8.6% | 8.5% | 8.2% | | |
| Total Employment | 84,130 | 81,890 | 82,810 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| Unadjusted | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 91,120 | 90,840 | 89,390 | 0.3 | 1.9 |
| Unemployed | 5,760 | 5,630 | 5,310 | 2.3 | 8.5 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 6.3% | 6.2% | 5.9% | | |
| Total Employment | 85,360 | 85,210 | 84,080 | 0.2 | 1.5 |
| JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK | | | | | |
| Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** | 68,520 | 67,580 | 67,600 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Goods-Producing Industries | 15,090 | 14,570 | 15,620 | 3.6 | -3.4 |
| Mining | 980 | 1,000 | 1,030 | -2.0 | -4.9 |
| Construction | 5,270 | 5,150 | 5,430 | 2.3 | -2.9 |
| Manufacturing | 8,840 | 8,420 | 9,160 | 5.0 | -3.5 |
| Lumber & Wood Products | 4,210 | 3,870 | 4,710 | 8.8 | -10.6 |
| All Other Manufacturing | 4,630 | 4,550 | 4,450 | 1.8 | 4.0 |
| Service-Producing Industries | 53,430 | 53,010 | 51,980 | 0.8 | 2.8 |
| Transportation | 1,550 | 1,610 | 1,580 | -3.7 | -1.9 |
| Communication & Utilities | 1,150 | 1,120 | 1,050 | 2.7 | 9.5 |
| Wholesale Trade | 2,310 | 2,300 | 2,240 | 0.4 | 3.1 |
| Retail Trade | 15,760 | 15,840 | 15,390 | -0.5 | 2.4 |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 2,550 | 2,600 | 2,510 | -1.9 | 1.6 |
| Service & Miscellaneous | 16,990 | 17,360 | 16,430 | -2.1 | 3.4 |
| Government Administration | 8,050 | 8,160 | 7,840 | -1.3 | 2.7 |
| Government Education | 5,070 | 4,020 | 4,940 | 26.1 | 2.6 |

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

care center, where it employs 120 people. Mountain View Construction began the expansion in July and expects to finish by the fall of 2001. The care center will add an aquatic therapy pool with underwater treadmills and water jets, private rooms, lounges, and office space at the nursing home and the behavioral care unit. St. Maries is the headquarters of Valley Vista, the nonprofit organization that operates care centers in Sandpoint and three southern Idaho communities in addition to St. Maries.

- Peet Shoe Dryer in St. Maries employs 27 people, making it the largest manufacturer in Benewah County not classified as a *Lumber & Wood Products* operation. Peet's makes electric appliances to dry boots and shoes, which are popular with loggers and other people who spend a lot of time outdoors. Peet's recently introduced a portable dryer that runs on propane.

Kootenai County

- Wal-Mart plans to build a 184,400-square-foot super-center north of Interstate 90 in Post Falls that will employ 300 people. It will open the discount center, including a grocery store, at Pines Road and Mullan Avenue in the fall of 2001.
- Albertson's latest trend—service stations next to their grocery stores—has arrived in North Idaho. The Albertson's store in Hayden soon will add a 2,000-square-foot fuel center, with eight gasoline pumps and a convenience store. It will employ 10 people. The Albertson's store that anchors the Ironwood Mall in Coeur d'Alene may also open an Albertson's Express fuel center between Schlotsky's Deli and Jack in the Box.
- Coldwater Creek, the Sandpoint-based mail-order company recently moved its 340 Coeur d'Alene call center employees. Formerly at leased quarters in the old Forest Service building on Ironwood Drive, they moved to a new building in the high-tech park north of Hecla Mining's corporate headquarters in late July. Increases in sales, particularly on the Internet, are keeping the call center busy as it enters the Christmas shopping season.
- Software-engineering company RADSoft moved from Phoenix to Coeur d'Alene in June. The company, now located at 322½ Sherman Avenue, provides programming and training services for Java software development. Its owner, John Goodsen, grew up in Mullan in Shoshone County.
- Triple Play, an entertainment complex that opened in Hayden in July, will expand during the next few months. Currently, Triple Play's bowling alley, miniature golf course, restaurant, video arcade, and other activities employ 70 people. Triple Play is adding a 33,000-square-foot inflatable dome with a golf driving range, batting cages, two indoor soccer areas, and a 32-foot climbing wall.
- Rathdrum's rapid growth is confirmed by the news that it soon will have a McDonald's. A new 32,000-square-foot McDonald's restaurant will open before Christmas near the intersection of Highways 41 and 53. Rathdrum's population grew 113.3 percent from 2,014 in April 1990 to 4,295 in 1999.
- Coeur d'Alene recently welcomed the following new businesses: Montessori, Messes & Magic School, a preschool and kindergarten on Miller Avenue; Silver Mountain Sports, a store associated with the Kellogg ski resort selling skis, snowmobiles, and accessories at 1602 Sherman Avenue; Salon Bella Dona, a full-service

beauty salon at 211 Lakeside Avenue; Casa de Oro, a Mexican restaurant in the former Pelican's Restaurant space on Highway 95; and a Gottschalk's department store in the former 44,500-square-foot Lamont's space at the Silver Lake Mall.

- New businesses in Post Falls include Scottish Knitwear, an outlet selling woolen clothing at the Post Falls Factory Stores; and Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill, a restaurant at 1760 Schneidmiller Avenue.
- Other new businesses in Kootenai County include the Pizza Factory, a restaurant at the Prairie Shopping Center just off Highway 95 in Hayden.

Shoshone County

- Tele-Servicing Innovations (TSI) recently announced it would bring up to 200 jobs to the Silver Valley. TSI plans to open a call center at the Silver Valley Industrial Park under development in Smelterville. The Panhandle Area Council (PAC) is building a 10,000-square-foot building there, which it will lease to TSI. When the building is completed in early 2001, TSI will move into the center. In the meantime, it is hiring 40 Silver Valley residents to work in temporary quarters in Coeur d'Alene, and has arranged for North Idaho Community Express (NICE) buses to take commuters from the Silver Valley to Coeur d'Alene. Once it moves into the Silver Valley Industrial Park, the TSI call center will increase to 120 jobs. Two years from now, it could employ as many as 200 people. Starting pay will begin at \$9 per hour. Interested job seekers may apply through Silver Valley Job Service.

TSI is the first of many potential tenants for the industrial park. Eventually, PAC will add a business incubator and a childcare center to serve employees of TSI and the park's other tenants. The Silver Valley Economic Development Corporation, the economic development organization that recruits businesses to the area, is looking for tenants for the industrial park.

TSI, based in Idaho Falls, operates call centers in Idaho Falls, Burley, and Salmon. It also recently announced it would open a call center in Grangeville in the next few

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